

1 VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY — CHAPTER

2 *An Act to amend and reenact § 54.1-3814 of the Code of Virginia, relating to devocalization of dogs*
3 *prohibited.*

4 [S 707]

5 Approved

6 **Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**7 **1. That § 54.1-3814 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**8 **§ 54.1-3814. Declawing cats; devocalization of dogs; prohibition.**

9 A. As used in this section:

10 "Cat" means any domesticated species of the family Felidae and does not include any wild or nonnative
11 species of the family Felidae.12 "Declawing procedure" means (i) an onychectomy, a dactylectomy, a phalangectomy, or any other
13 procedure that removes a portion of the paw or digit of a cat in order to remove a claw; (ii) a tendonectomy or
14 any other procedure that cuts or modifies the tendon of the limb, paw, or digit of a cat in order to prohibit the
15 normal movement of a claw; or (iii) any procedure that prevents the normal functioning of one or more claws
16 of a cat. "Declawing procedure" does not include nail filing, nail trimming, or the placement of temporary
17 nail caps on one or more claws of a cat.18 "Therapeutic purpose" means any action intended (i) to address an existing or recurring infection, disease,
19 injury, or abnormal condition in an animal's claw, nail bed, or toe bone that jeopardizes the animal's health,
20 and for which addressing the infection, disease, injury, or abnormal condition is a medical necessity, as
21 documented by a licensed veterinarian, or (ii) to protect the owner's life or health, as documented by a
22 licensed physician, when such owner has been diagnosed with an infection, disease, disorder, or similar
23 condition that could reasonably be expected to worsen if such owner were to be scratched by a cat. For
24 purposes of this definition, "owner" includes members of the owner's household. "Therapeutic purpose" does
25 not include any action performed for cosmetic or aesthetic reasons or reasons of convenience in the keeping
26 or handling of a cat.27 B. It is unlawful for any person engaged in the practice of veterinary medicine to perform a declawing
28 procedure on a cat, except such person may perform such a procedure if it is necessary for a therapeutic
29 purpose.30 C. *It is unlawful for any person engaged in the practice of veterinary medicine to perform a surgical*
31 *devocalization procedure on a dog, except when such procedure is necessary to treat or relieve any injury,*
32 *disease, or congenital defect that is causing or may cause the dog physical pain or harm.*